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(54) Title: METHOD FOR PRODUCING ECOLOGIC CAPSULE OF NATURAL ORIGIN FOR PRODUCTS WITH CONTROLLED RELEASE OF THE ACTIVE INGREDIENT					
(57) Abstract					
<p>The invention relates to a process for producing capsule or microcapsule containing cellulose and/or starch. The process according to the invention can be characterized in that 0-50 % by weight of polymers are added to the capsule material of natural origin at a temperature of 10 to 50°C, the suspension is vigorously stirred, thereafter 0 to 50 % by weight of urea-formaldehyde resin pre-condensate are admixed, the colloidal solution thus obtained is applied onto the acid mixture - preferably with 10 % by weight of sulphur acid - containing 0.1 to 5 % by weight of cross-linking catalyst, expediently ammonium sulfate, furtheron 0.01 to 5 % by weight of ethoxylated amine surface-active material, the capsules thus obtained are washed and dried at 40 to 100°C, thereafter different active ingredients respectively the solutions thereof are contacted with the capsule, at last the blotted capsule is to be powdered.</p>					

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METHOD FOR PRODUCING ECOLOGIC CAPSULE OF NATURAL ORIGIN
FOR PRODUCTS WITH CONTROLLED RELEASE OF THE ACTIVE
INGREDIENT

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The invention relates to a method for producing ecologic capsules of natural origin decomposing in the environment which can preferably be used for selective plant protecting agents with timed release of the active 10 ingredient.

In recent decades all over the world research activity with considerable effort has been performed in order to produce such capsules for applying plant protecting compositions which assure maximal efficiency even in 15 minimal doses, simultaneously prevent leakage of the plant protecting agent from the zone of utilization or unwanted premature decomposition thereof, e.g. upon UV-radiation.

In case, if rooting zone is considered as the zone of utilization, it is of utmost importance that the plant protecting agent should meet here expediently all the harmful 20 organisms, such as fungi and other pathogenic bacteria, weeds or other parasites living in the soil.

The application of the plant protecting agents does not always coincide with the appearance of pathogenic and 25 parasite beings. A further problem lies in the matter of shelf-life of the active ingredients, guaranteed time.

Application of natural polymers or the derivatives thereof forming a complex with the given plant protecting agent belong to successful solutions. The use of e.g. 30 starch or starch derivatives for encapsulating EPTC has also been known, and it has been tried to bind on urea-formaldehyde resin, resulting in the accessory advantage that the carrier serves also as artificial fertilizer.

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- A further method has been elaborated, by which
- starting from emulsion - a solid crust was formed on the
surface of drops of colloidal size by means of condensation
on phase boundary. This crust assures that the active
5 ingredient gets onto the aimed surface when decomposing or as
a semi-permeable film.

- Experts are also dealing with the combination of
various natural polymers, such as starch, latex and artifi-
cial resins. So e.g. shelf-life could successfully be
10 improved, release of the active ingredient could be
controlled, when assurance of proper particle size is
problematic.

- In the Japanese Patent Specifications 0072-806, 2033-
-103, 2003-795, 0072-804, 1129-138, 8021-602, 0104-095
15 various cyclodextrin derivatives are used for the formula-
tion of the active ingredients of plant protecting agents.

- According to Japanese Patent Specification 8021-605
some porous carriers (e.g. a sponge, paper, a cloth etc.)
are impregnated with the volatile plant protecting composi-
20 tions.

- According to the WP Patent Specification 8300-796
for encapsulating of plant protecting agents hollow rods on
cellulose basis are used, optionally the outer surface is
treated with paraffin.

- 25 As it becomes obvious from the WIPO Patent Specifica-
tion 8303-61 a double capsule system is formed, in which the
capsule of larger dimension contains a plurality of micro-
capsules. For the shaping of the capsule cellulose acetate
is used.

- 30 According to Japanese Patent Specification No. 8121-
-212 a gel-type product, i.e. a plant protecting agent
is produced from polyacrylate and epoxy-resin for the
controlled release of the active ingredient.

- In accordance with EP 205 978 carriers containing
35 polyvinyl alcohol and starch are used as capsules for

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different pesticides (parathion, trifluraline), feromones and regulators.

In accordance with the EP 121 712 biocides and medicines can be encapsulated by using organophil cellulose
5 ethers.

DE-PS 1 567 066 suggests to encapsulate plant growth regulators and herbicides by using carriers made of thermoplastic synthetic resin and resin soluble in a solvent.

10 In accordance with the Japanese Patent Specification No. 9 142 264 polysulfone, polycarbonate, cellulose and vinyl-acetate copolymers are applied as carriers for insecticides.

According to US-PS 4 451 635 a carrier is described using water-soluble polymethane-quaternary ammonium salts
15 and ion-exchanging resin.

J 5 7185-344 describes the production of a carrier with timely prolonged release of the active ingredient for attractants, disinfectants and plant protecting agents.

20 As carrier poly-caprolactame is used, which can be combined with other synthetic materials, so e.g. nitro-cellulose, butylcaoutchouc etc. containing also filler, such as silicagel, calcium carbonate or aluminium oxide.

In accordance with the J5 8010-
25 -503 polymer with a high water-absorbing capacity, e.g. inoculated copolymer of starch and polyacrylonitrile is applied for the preparation of agrochemicals, which can optionally be cross-linked.

According to EP - 214 396 A water-
30 soluble polymers are used (e.g. poly-vinyl-alcohol, hydroxy-ethyl-, hydroxypropyl-, methyl-cellulose).

Additionally condensation on the phase boundary is performed by using urea-resin.

EP 158-449 specifies a process for producing capsules for liquids immiscible with
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water, in the course of which a porous crust is formed from the pre-polymerisate of urea-formaldehyde in an organic solvent, to encapsulate plant protecting agents and artificial fertilizers.

5 According to J6 2201-156 a carrier is made with a slow release of the active ingredient by using binding materials and film-forming materials, as e.g. polyvinyl-alcohol, polyvinyl-acetate, polyethylene and silicon resin.

10 The US-PS 4 615 883 describes the production of a macrocapsule with a grain size of 0,4 - 5,0 mm, made of hydrogel, which can be produced from sodium-alginate, gelatine and acacia gum.

According to Australian Patent A 8 767-199 a polymer 15 is used, which tends to biological decomposition, in such a manner microorganisms are encapsulated, wherein the number of germs may amount to 10^6 - 10^{10} unit/g and the size of pearls can be controlled in the range between 0,5 and 40 mm. As material we may use gelatine, alginate, polyacrylamide and 20 cellulose ether.

According to J5 9050-086 a granulate is prepared which is made of some hydrophobic materials, such as paraffin, resin and waxes. Paraffin-shell serves as a coating of grains of artificial fertilizers.

25 J5 9048-402 offers a solution for preparing capsules for volatile insecticides. Evaporation of the active ingredient is achieved by a controllable calorific process. Calorification is started respectively controlled by diffusing oxygen.

30 According to the solution, suggested in US-PS 4 400 391 alginate pearls are used for fixing insecticides. As gel-forming agents Cu, Zn, Al, Pb- salts can be applied.

According to research activities in the USA, the results of which were published in 1975 and 1976, starch - 35 - xanthogenate is well suitable for encapsulating plant

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protecting agents, as a matrix assuring slow release of the active ingredient. When using xanthogenate cross-linking may be performed by using epichlorohydrine or hydrogen peroxide. In this case water-soluble and insoluble plant protecting 5 agents are encapsulated.

Plant protecting agents having been encapsulated with starch-xanthate are stable, they can be stored without problems. Upon water the active ingredient will be released.

10 EPTC (S-ethyl-dipropyl-thiocarbamate) and DBPC (1,2-dibromo-3-chloropropane) give a stable capsule, from which volatility of the active ingredient is satisfactory, simultaneously it is well-resistant to sunlight.

15 Said researchers tested the applicability of latex in respect to the aforementioned active ingredients, while prior to xanthogenation small quantities of latex were added to the starch and cross-linked with sodium-nitrite. In course of some tests zinc sulfate was also used for cross-linking.

20 In laboratory experiments encapsulation of N-(phosphorous methyl)-glycine and ammonium sulfate could be performed with the best results.

The effect of SBR 1502 (Styrene-butadiene latex) additive on encapsulating DBCP has been tested, at a determined mixing ratio an excellent shelf-time could be achieved.

25 (Northern Regional Research Laboratory Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Preoria, Illinois 61604) received March 12, 1976).

The aim of our invention:

30 The capsules as elaborated by us are ecologic, they consist of quickly decomposing and cheap material, the decomposition thereof in the soil takes places without harmful residues. Novelty of the method according to the invention lies in that the aggregate of microcapsule(s) is (are) stiffened in a solid matrix - optionally in colloidal 35 distribution-, in respect to bond strength and releasing

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ability it (they) act(s), as if it (they) were individual particles.

We have also recognized another method that is the microcapsule is arranged in the centre of the solid matrix

5 as a result of the process according to the invention and communication with the outer world is realized through the channels and cavities of the matrix.

Another construction is based on the recognition, in so far as the spherical matrix is woven through radially by
10 the polymer threads and funnels of the active carrier, and the microsize appears in one dimension only, while the other size falls into the mezo-range.

The matrix according to the invention can be characterized in that it is insoluble in water but is decomposed in
15 the soil without harmful residues, the active filler does not dissolve in water either and it is ecologic.

A novelty of the method of the invention, lies in that the plant protecting agent intended to be encapsulated are prepared expediently for fixing in the carrier, in the
20 capsule.

E.g. from the well-known active ingredient benomyl a stable suspension is prepared in carbon disulfide, or the heptane solution thereof is used.

Similarly to benomyl, the fungicidally active
25 carbendazim with systemic effect, can be encapsulated. When formulating captan fungicide we started from ethyl alcoholic or acetone solutions.

In accordance with the process according to the invention, when producing microcapsule or capsule we started
30 with natural polymers. E.G. aqueous solution of cellulose, aqueous starch suspension and/or aqueous solution of starch, latex solution, urea-formaldehyde resin of low condensation grade or starting components are used, when condensation is carried out in course of capsulation, in the presence of a
35 coagulation catalyst.

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In the initial phase of capsule production optionally active carbon of well-defined grain size can be added to the polymer compound being present. In the course of the capsule-forming process, taking place in the mixture of mineral and 5 organic acids, surfactants are used, as e.g. BEROL products and as a cross-linking agent copper complexes are used. In certain cases as filler polyacrylonitrile in a pulverized form is used of a grain size of 1 to 10 micron.

The formulation of the capsules may be carried out by 10 methods known per se, however different methods of drying can also be used.

The active ingredient (solution, suspension, emulsion) is absorbed by the finished capsule by methods known per se. In certain cases, by using the method according to the 15 invention, condensation on the phase frontier may be carried out too.

The details of the invention are illustrated in the following examples.

20 Example 1

A carrier (capsule) for encapsulating selective herbicides can be prepared, as follows:

100 dm³ cellulose solution is weighed into a tank of 0.25 m³ equipped with an agitator (related to the 25 cellulose a 5% solution), 50 dm³ starch suspension are admixed thereto (suspension may be prepared from corn starch in a 5% NaOH solution, while the suspension content of the solution amounts to 10%), 1 dm³ ammonia latex solution with an active ingredient content of 60% is added too.

30 After vigorous stirring 10 dm³ urea-formaldehyde-resin precondensate are admixed, while the required catalyst is added to the acidic solution to precipitate.

As a cross-linking agent we add 1 dm³ of 1% copper - tetramine hydroxyde. The polymer mixture thus produced is 35 put into the acidic bath in the shaping equipment known

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per se, which is preferably an aqueous mixture of 10% sulfuric acid and 5% acetic acid. The bath contains in a concentration of 1-2 g/dm³ a surfactant (BEROL SPINN 62).

The capsule thus obtained is washed and dried. We 5 obtain a granular carrier of a diameter of 1-2 mm, thereafter the prepared plant protecting agent is adsorbed thereon.

The application of the product into the soil is carried out by methods known per se in the period of sowing 10 of cultivated plants. Upon the effect of soil moisture caused by rainwater the active ingredient will be released gradually.

Example 2

A cellulose solution - of a concentration of 4,8 - 15 - 5,3% related to cellulose - is added into a 0,25 m³ enamelled tank equipped with an agitator. The cellulose solution contains 80% cellulose xanthogenate, 15% carboxy-methyl cellulose, as well as 5% starch-xanthogenate.

6 kg finely-divided active charcoal are added to the 20 aforementioned solution with an active surface of 1000 m²/g, furtheron finely-ground bran in an amount of 20 kg.

Finally 2 kg of urea-formaldehyde pre-condensate are added, thereafter the mixture is stirred for two hours with an Anker-agitator. The solution thus obtained is allowed to 25 pass through a sieve cloth of 100 µm mesh.

The filtered polymer concentrate is converted into drops. Upon contacting them with acid fume drops are coagulated, the coagulated substance is washed and dried. We thus obtain a carrier of a grain-size of 0.5 - 1.0 mm, by the aid of 30 which herbicide with a selective effect (e.g. EPTC) is encapsulated by a method known per se.

The used polymer components bind the plant protecting agents with different strength, thus the combined carrier guarantees timely programmed release of the active 35 ingredient.

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The release of the active ingredient is completed with the complete decomposition of the carrier in the soil.

Example 3

5 Using the equipment as described in example 2, we admix 10 kg of pulverized acrylonitrile - styrene sulfonate copolymer to 200 dm³ cellulose solution, (grain size in the range between 1 and 10 micron). Due to the ion-exchanging groups of said additive the binding of the plant protecting
10 agent and the controlled release of the active ingredient can be achieved.

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Claims

1. A process for producing capsule or microcapsule containing cellulose and/or starch, characterized in that 0-50 % by weight of polymers are added to the capsule material of natural origin at a temperature of 10 to 50 °C, the suspension is vigorously stirred, thereafter 0 to 50 % by weight of urea-formaldehyde resin pre-condensate are admixed, the colloidal solution thus obtained is applied onto the acid solution mixture - preferably 10 % by weight of sulphuric acid - containing 0,1 to 5 % by weight of cross-linking catalyst, preferably ammonium sulfate, furtheron 0,01 to 5 % by weight of ethoxylated amine surfactant, the capsules thus obtained are washed and dried at 40 to 100 °C, thereafter various active ingredients respectively the solutions thereof are contacted with the capsule, and the absorbed capsule is powdered.
2. A process as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that in order to produce capsules as gel-forming additives ammonium sulfate, ammonium carbonate, zinc tetramine hydroxyde or copper tetramine hydroxyde are added.
3. A process as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that in addition to the micro-capsule structure fixed in the matrix, by using the so-called powdering method, by the additional application of a mixture made of the fine grist of one or more components onto the grain surface a loosely bond crust is produced resulting in a double shell-structure, while adhesion is achieved by a natural polymer solution or the powder thereof, preferably pulverized potassium humate or solution, or pulverized carboxy-methyl cellulose or solution.
4. A process as claimed in claim 1 and 3, characterized in that when preparing the active ingredient, particularly a plant protecting agent to be

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encapsulated, a stable suspension or emulsion is prepared of
a solvent being efficient and unharful from the point of view
of ecology, as well as of additives (e.g. carbon disulfide)
promoting adsorption in the capsule and improving chemical
5 bond, while in the soil proper desorption is assured upon the
effect of moisture.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No. PCT/HU 90/00021

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) *

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC

IPC⁵: B 01 J 13/14, A 01 N 25/28

II. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum Documentation Searched ?

Classification System	Classification Symbols
Int.C1. ⁵	B 01 J 13/02, B 01 J 13/14, A 01 N 25/26, A 01 N 25/28

Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation
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III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT*

Category *	Citation of Document, ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹²	Relevant to Claim No. ¹³
A	EP, A, 0 305 212 (ROHM AND HASS) 01 March 1989 (01.03.89), see examples; claims.	(1-4)
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Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search

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